X-MEN

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THE ALL-NEW, ALL-DIFFERENT

X-MEN™

IT'S THE NIGHT OF THE DEMON!

BUT IF THE X-MEN CAN'T DEFEAT IT, IT MAY BE THE LAST NIGHT OF THE WORLD!

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Cyclops, Storm. Banshee. Nightcrawler. Wolverine. Colossus. Children of the atom, students of Charles Xavier, MUTANTS——feared and hated by the world they have sworn to protect. These are the STRANGEST heroes of all——these are the X-MEN!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE UNCANNY X-MEN!

NIGHT OF THE DEMON!

AUTUMN'S COME EARLY THIS YEAR--THE SEPTEMBER APPLES HANGING HEAVY IN THE ORCHARDS, THE TREES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HUDSON RIVER ABLAZE WITH A THOUSAND MYRIAD FIRES...

...A THOUSAND MYRIAD SHADES OF... DEATH!

YOU KNOW HIM WELL, DON'T YOU, CYCLOPS-- THIS DARK ONE, THIS GREAT DESTROYER--

--YOU AND YOUR FELLOW X-MEN HAVE WALKED WITH HIM ALL YOUR YOUNG LIVES --FLAUNTED HIM, TAUNTED HIM, TILTED WITH HIM-- AND YOU'D ALWAYS GOTTEN AWAY UNSCATHED...

...UNTIL NOW.

UNTIL... THUNDERBIRD.

CHRIS CLAREMONT- AUTHOR
DAVE COCKRUM- ARTIST
SAM GRAINGER - INKER
DAVE HUNT- LETTERER
PHIL RACHELSON - COLORIST
MARV WOLFMAN- EDITOR

WITH A WELCOME PLOTTING ASSIST FROM BOISTEROUS BILL MANTLO.

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IT'S BEEN WEEKS NOW SINCE THUNDERBIRD DIED,* AND THE MEMORY STILL HURTS, DOESN'T IT, CYCLOPS...

...THE NAGGING FEELING--THE FEAR--THAT IF YOU'D ACTED DIFFERENTLY, THUNDERBIRD WOULD BE ALIVE TODAY.

*LAST ISH--MARV.

AWAKE OR ASLEEP, YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THE IMAGES SEARED INTO YOUR MIND'S EYE:

IMAGES OF COUNT NEFARIA MAKING A LAST, DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO FLEE VALHALLA BASE... OF THUNDERBIRD TRYING TO STOP HIM...

YOU MADMAN --YOU'LL KILL US BOTH!!

FOR GOD'S SAKE, LADDIE--GET OFF THE PLANE!!

...OF THUNDERBIRD'S FINAL, DEFIANT CRY.

...I'M A MAN, XAVIER, A WARRIOR OF THE APACHE--

--AND TODAY I'M GONNA PROVE IT!!

YOU REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED NEXT, DON'T YOU, CYCLOPS?

WHOOOM!

AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT?

CYCLOPS, THE AIRCRAFT ...IT'S...

I CAN SEE IT, PETER...

RAKA-THAAM!!

THUNDERBIRD HADN'T GOTTEN OUT.

THAT'S THE REAL HELL OF HIS DEATH, ISN'T IT, CYCLOPS--BECAUSE YOU KNOW HE HADN'T EVEN TRIED TO GET OUT.

YOU AND THE X-MEN HAD SAVED THE WORLD FROM A NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST--BUT YOU'D LOST A MAN TO DO IT...

...AND TRY AS YOU MIGHT, YOU CAN'T BALANCE THOSE SCALES, IN YOUR MIND OR IN YOUR HEART...

...CAN YOU, CYCLOPS?

NO.

CAN YOU?

NO!

CAN YOU?!

NO!!

NNNNOOOOOO!!!

ZZZRRRAAAAMM!!!

HE'S NEVER CUT LOOSE LIKE THIS BEFORE--WITHOUT THOUGHT OR CARE OR RESTRAINT...

ZZRRAAUU!!

...THE POWER FLOWS THRU HIM LIKE A THING ALIVE--

--AND FOR THOSE FEW MOMENTS THERE IS HATRED IN HIM, YES, BUT THERE IS GLORY TOO--AN UNHOLY GLORY, A NEED, A ...HUNGER...

...BUT THEN THE MOMENTS PASS...

...AND SCOTT SUMMERS IS HIMSELF AGAIN.

OH MY LORD--

WHAT HAVE I DONE??

WAY TO GO, HERO.

I GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU, SUMMERS --WHEN THEY WERE GIVING OUT BRAINS AND COMMON SENSE...

...YOU MUST NOT HAVE EVEN BOTHERED TO STAND ON LINE-- YOU KNOW HOW DANGEROUS YOUR EYE BEAMS ARE!

YOU KNEW THE RULES-- AND THE RISKS-- WHEN YOU GOT INTO THIS GAME...

...ALL THE X-MEN DID, THUNDERBIRD INCLUDED.

AND YOU'RE TOP MAN IN THIS OUTFIT, CYCLOPS--YOU WANTED THE JOB AND YOU'RE GOOD AT IT-- AND NOW YOU'VE GOT TO PAY THE PRICE...

...BECAUSE THIS JOB MEANS TAK-ING BAD AS WELL AS GOOD. IT MEANS WATCH-ING YOUR FRIENDS LIVE-- AND WATCHING THEM DIE...

...AND THUNDERBIRD IS DEAD, MISTER-- ALL THE WISHING IN THE WORLD WON'T BRING HIM BACK.

HE'S DEAD AND YOU'RE ALIVE-- AND THAT'S IT! LIKE IT OR NOT --NO MATTER HOW MUCH IT HURTS-- THE REST OF US HAVE TO GO ON LIVING.

REST IN PEACE, JOHN PROUDSTAR...

YOU'VE EARNED THAT MUCH, AT LEAST.

SO HAVE YOU, CYCLOPS...

...AND IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL...

...YOU MAY SOON BE RESTING AS PEACEFULLY-- AND AS PERMANENTLY --AS YOUR FRIEND.

CUT NOW: ACROSS THE WOODLAND MILES TO AN AFTERNOON SESSION OF...

WOLVERINE, NO! YOU CAUGHT ME BY SUR-PRISE--

--I HIT YOU FULL STRENGTH!!

SWOT!

...FUN AND GAMES, X-MEN STYLE!

ARE YOU HURT, MY FRIEND?

NAW-- YOU ONLY MADE ME MAD--

--AND, BABY, THE WOLVERINE JUST LOVES TO GET MAD.

SNICKT

GANGWAY, COLOSSUS --THIS ISN'T GONNA HURT YOU-- MUCH--

--HEY!!

CORRECTION, WOLVERINE--IT WILL NOT HURT PETER AT ALL--

--MY WIND BLASTS HAVE SEEN TO THAT.

HAHA

HEY, ELF--WHAT'S SO FUNNY--?!

YOU DON'T LAUGH AT ME, NIGHTCRAWLER --GOT THAT?!

HA HA HA HA

NOBODY LAUGHS AT THE WOLVERINE, MISTER--

KURT-- WATCH OUT!!

EH--??

--NOBODY!!

BAMF!

WOLVERINE!!

LADDIE--TAKE IT EASY. YE COULD HAVE KILLED NIGHT-CRAWLER THEN, Y'KNOW...

YEAH-- I KNOW.

BANSHEE-- COULD I HAVE A WORD WITH YOU, PLEASE?

YE'RE LOOKING *TIRED*, CHARLES...

I *AM* TIRED. THESE LAST FEW *WEEKS* HAVE NOT BEEN *...PLEASANT* ONES...

I KNOW-- THUNDERBIRD'S DEATH HAS GOT US *ALL* A BIT *DOWN.*

IT'S *SCOTT* I'M WORRIED ABOUT...

HE'S TRYING *NOT* TO SHOW IT, BUT THUNDERBIRD'S DEATH HAS *AF-FECTED* HIM *DEEPLY--*

--HE'S STARTING TO *BROOD--MAKE MISTAKES...*

...IF HE DOESN'T *EASE UP* ON HIMSELF AND *RELAX...* I DON'T KNOW, BANSHEE ...I JUST *DON'T KNOW...*

BLAST! IS IT FOUR *ALREADY--?*

I'M EXPECTING OUR NEW *HOUSEKEEPER--* SHE'S TO *LOOK AFTER* THE HOUSE AND... *THINGS* WHILE I'M *GONE...*

BING BONG

GONE? GONE *WHERE?*

IN FACT, *THAT* SHOULD BE HER NOW.

"*HOUSEKEEPER,*" HE SAYS--"A NICE *WIDDER-WOMAN,* NAME OF *MOIRA MACTAGGERT...*"

BING BONG

...PROBABLY *80 YEARS OLD,* UGLY AS SIN--WITH FORTY YEARS SERVICE IN THE *SCOTS GUARDS...*

ALL RIGHT. *ALL RIGHT-- I'M COMIN'!!*

I *SAID* I WAS COMIN' --THERE'S *NO NEED* FOR YE TA LEAN ON THE *BLOODY DOOR...* BELL...

WHO THE BLAZES ARE YE??

AH *BEG* YUIR *PARDON--!*

MAH NAME IS *MOIRA MACTAGGERT* --AN' AH'VE BEEN ENGAGED AS *HOUSEKEEPER* HERE BY *PRO-FESSOR CHARLES XAVIER...*

D'YOU WANT TO MAKE *SOMETHIN' OF IT,* THEN?!

CUT AGAIN: TO A ONCE-SECRET INSTALLATION SHROUDED DEEP WITHIN THE ADIRONDACK MOUNTAIN PRESERVE OF NORTHERN NEW YORK --AND TO WHAT MAY WELL BE...

THERE'S THE WASHINGTON COURIER, DR. LANG --RIGHT ON SCHEDULE...

ABOUT TIME, TOO.

THIS SIDE UP

PROJECT ARMAGEDDON

...A RENDEZVOUS WITH DESTINY.

2

STRANGE --I'VE BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROJECT OVER SIX YEARS-- AND NOW THAT IT'S NEARING FRUITION...

...I'M AS NERVOUS AS A FRESHMAN AT FINALS.

MICHAEL! COLONEL ROSSI! IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU!

AM I RIGHT IN ASSUMING YOU'VE SOME GOOD NEWS FOR ME?

I HAVE SOME... NEWS, DR. LANG. FOR YOUR EARS ALONE.

THEY'VE AGREED THEN--I'VE GOT THE GREEN LIGHT.

NO. NOT YET. THE COUNCIL WANTS A FINAL REPORT --YEA OR NAY --GO OR NO GO--

--AND THEY WANT ME TO GIVE IT TO THEM.

AND YOU'RE AGAINST IT. WE USED TO BE FRIENDS, MICHAEL--WHAT HAPPENED?

THIS HAPPENED-- THIS PROJECT OF YOURS, SIX YEARS OF YOUR LIFE, A BILLION DOLLARS IN ILLEGAL APROPRIATIONS-- AND FOR WHAT--?

JUST SO YOU CAN KIDNAP A FEW LOUSY MUTANTS?!?

YES!! KIDNAP THEM --SECURE THESE MUTANT SPECIMENS FOR IN-DEPTH EXAMINATION-- SO THAT MANKIND WILL AT LAST KNOW ITS TRUE ENEMY--!

THAT'S WHAT MY WORK IS ALL ABOUT, MICHAEL--

--PROJECT ARMAGEDDON.!!

THE FINAL ULTIMATE CONFLICT BETWEEN HOMO SAPIENS AND HOMO SUPERIOR-- BETWEEN MAN... AND MUTANT!

YOU THINK I'M *EXAGGERATING* THE THREAT?

I THINK THERE IS *NO THREAT.*

WHY? BECAUSE THE *ONLY* MUTANTS ANYONE KNOWS OF *FOR SURE* ARE THE *X-MEN?* NOW WHO'S PLAYING THE *FOOL?*

BOLIVAR TRASK KNEW-- HE UNDERSTOOD THE *DANGER*-- HE POINTED THE *WAY*--

--HE TRIED TO *STOP* THE MUTANTS, MICHAEL, AND THEY *KILLED* HIM FOR IT, HIM AND HIS *SON.*

THE BEAST

BUT THEY *WON'T* DESTROY *ME.*

EVERY CONTINGENCY HAS BEEN PREPARED FOR-- NO DETAIL HAS BEEN SPARED, MICHAEL, *NOTHING* LEFT TO *CHANCE.*

THE *MUTANTS* CANNOT STOP ME-- *NO ONE* CAN STOP ME *NOW!*

I CAN *STOP* YOU.

YOU'RE *WRONG,* STEVE--ALL THE WAY DOWN THE LINE...

NO, MY FRIEND, *YOU* ARE WRONG. BECAUSE WE ARE THE ANCIENT *NEANDERTHALS* FACING THE MUTANT *CRO-MAGNON*--

--IT IS *US* OR THEM, KILL OR *BE KILLED*--THERE IS *NO OTHER WAY!*

EVEN IF THAT WERE *TRUE,* YOUR PROJECT *ISN'T* THE ANSWER, NOT *THESE DAYS* --THE COUNTRY COULDN'T *SURVIVE* YOUR KIND OF MUTANT *WITCH HUNT.*

PROJECT ARMAGEDDON IS OVER, STEVE; IT'S *FINISHED* AS SOON AS I GET BACK TO *WASHINGTON*... I'M JUST *SORRY* IT HAD TO END LIKE *THIS*...

SO AM *I,* COLONEL ROSS!. BECAUSE THAT MEANS YOU MUST *NEVER* REACH WASHINGTON...

...ALIVE.

IT'S NIGHT NOW, THE QUIET END TO A LONG, STRENUOUS DAY...

...A TIME TO RELAX OVER A GOOD MEAL... A TIME FOR THE X-MEN TO BE FORMALLY INTRODUCED TO THEIR NEW HOUSEKEEPER...

...MRS. MOIRA MACTAGGERT.

SHE'S TO LOOK AFTER THE HOUSE--AND ALL OF YOU-- WHILE I'M AWAY.

YOU CUTTIN' OUT ON US, BOSS?

FOR A WHILE, WOLVERINE. EVERY MAN NEEDS A VACATION AT SOME POINT IN HIS LIFE...

...I'VE DECIDED THE TIME HAS COME FOR MINE.

MISTRESS MACTAGGERT--I JUST WANTED TO APOLOGISE FOR ME BRUSQUE MANNER THIS AFTERNOON...

CASSIDY, MA'AM. SEAN CASSIDY. AN' I'D CONSIDER IT AN HONOR, INDEED IF YE'D JOIN ME FER A CUP O' COFFEE...

IT'S NA NECESSARY, MR.... AH...

BANSHEE SEEMS QUITE TAKEN WITH MRS. MACTAGGERT--

WE ALL ARE, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER-- BUT, PROFESSOR, IF YOU ARE SO INTENT ON KEEPING OUR EXISTENCE SECRET FROM THE WORLD...

...WHY REVEAL OUR TRUE NATURE TO THIS ...HOUSEKEEPER?

THAT IS MY AFFAIR, ORORO.

BUT REST ASSURED-- OUR SECRET IS SAFE WITH MOIRA MACTAGGERT. SAFE UNTO DEATH.

BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU SEEN SCOTT ANY-WHERE?

ZZRRAM M

GOOD LORD-- THOSE ARE SCOTT'S EYE-BEAMS, BLASTING FULL POWER--

--AND THEY'RE RIGHT OUTSIDE!!

NOT QUITE, PROFESSOR. AT LEAST, NOT ANYMORE...

ZZRACKAU!

KRAKAK

MY GOD-- SCOTT!!

LADDIE-- ARE YE ALL RIGHT--

--DON'T TRY TO GET UP, BOYO --JUST REST EASY AN' YE'LL BE FOINE...

NO-- YOU DON'T UNDER-STAND-- IT WAS RIGHT BEHIND ME --COMING UP FAST--

--IT'LL BE HERE ANY SECOND NOW!

CORRECTION, CYCLOPS--

--IT'S HERE NOW.

HOLY HANNAH --WHAT IS THAT THING?

RRRAUURRR

I AM KIERROK LITTLE ANIMAL-- KIERROK THE SHAT-TERER OF SOULS --KIERROK THE SLAYER OF MEN--

--KIERROK THE DAMNED!

AND I HAVE COME FOR YOU THIS NIGHT, HUMANS --FOR YOUR LIVES--

--AND FOR YOUR SOULS.!!

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I HAVE COME FOR YOU, *EYELESS ONE,* WHO AWAKENED ME *BEFORE MY TIME--!*

KRAUU!

X-MEN, *SCATTER*--ATTACK THE DEMON AS A *TEAM* --AS SCOTT AND I *TAUGHT YOU*--THAT'S OUR *ONLY HOPE*--

YOU SPEAK AS THE *LEADER,* OLD ONE--FOR THAT, MY CLAWS WILL TASTE *YOUR BLOOD* FIRST...

NOT WHILE *STORM* IS ALIVE TO *STOP YOU,* DEMON!

STORM, NO!!

DON'T BOTHER ABOUT *ME*--MY *MENTAL POWERS* WILL PROTECT ME! I AM IN *NO DANGER*--BUT *YOU ARE*--!

GET *OUT OF HERE,* STORM--YOU'RE *NO MATCH* FOR KIERROK ON YOUR *OWN* --*GET OUT*-- *NOW!!*

AAAAAA!

YOU ARE *TOO SLOW,* FEMALE--AND KIERROK'S *CLAWS* ARE *TOO SHARP*--

YOUR *DEATH* WILL BE *QUICK,* WINGED ONE--

--YOU MAY *THANK* KIERROK FOR HIS *KINDNESS.*

STORM WILL THANK YOU FOR *NOTHING,* MONSTER!

HE *THREATENED* YOU, ORORO--HE TRIED TO *KILL YOU*--!

BRUHMM!

PETER --BE CAREFUL.!!

KTAKOOOM!

AND *THAT* COLOSSUS *WILL NOT ALLOW!!*

DO YOU ANIMALS THINK KIERROK IS SO EASILY DEFEATED--ARE YOU SUCH FOOLS--!?!

I AM A CHILD OF THE N'GARAI-- A CHILD OF THE ELDER GODS, WE WHO ONCE RULED THIS EARTH OF YOURS--!

CCCC

I AM YOUR MASTER, HUMANS--

RRRRAAKK

--YOU CAN NEVER DEFEAT ME! NEVER.!!

KRUMF!

COLOSSUS, LOOK OUT.!!

PERHAPS NOT, GARGOYLE--

--BUT WE CAN ALL DIE TRYING!

BRAP!

SO FALL, MONSTROUS ABOMINATION --FALL.!

WHY DON'T YOU FALL?!?

KRAK!

KIERROK DOES NOT FALL TO SUCH AS YOU, CHANGELING.

TRAAHH!

ZZKRAP

YYRRRRAIII!!

FELLA, YOU JUST SAID THE WRONG THING--

--'CAUSE THE MISFIT MAY BE A MIS-FIT, BUT HE'S WOLVERINE'S BUDDY--

--AN' NOBODY BEATS ON WOLVERINE'S BUDDIES!

YOU-- HURT-- ME!!

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN COUNTLESS AEONS A HUMAN HAS HURT ME!

HURT YOU?

BABY, YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET.

THERE'S A SAYING ABOUT WOLVERINES-- THE FOUR-LEGGED KIND-- YOU CAN PUSH THEM JUST SO FAR... AND THEN THEY'LL GO FOR YOUR THROAT!

HAAAIIIIII--

AND THEY WON'T BACK OFF UNTIL YOU'RE DEAD --OR THEY ARE!

THE SAME GOES FOR THE MU-TANT KNOWN ONLY AS... WOLVERINE.

--YAAAHHH!!

PUSH HIM TOO FAR AND HE GOES MAD-- AND WHEN HE DOES, HE KILLS.

CASE IN POINT:

TEN YEARS O' PSYCHO-TRAINING. O' HYPNOTISM. O' DRUG THERAPY. TEN YEARS O' PRAYIN'...

...AN' I CUT HIM TO PIECES WITHOUT A THOUGHT.

NOTHING CHANGES, PROF-- I THOUGHT I'D LEARNED TO CONTROL MYSELF--I GUESS I WAS WRONG-- AN' YA WANTA KNOW SOMETHIN' FUNNY--

--I'M GLAD!

YOU WANT TO KNOW SOMETHING EVEN *FUNNIER*--?

KIERROK'S *NOT DEAD.*

HUH--? *BUT I*--?

HEY, MAN--THIS IS *CRAZY.*

I *BLASTED* HIM A DOZEN TIMES-- *FULL STRENGTH*--AND EACH TIME HE *REFORMED,* STRONGER THAN BEFORE...

...WHILE *EACH* TIME, I FELT *WEAKER.*

YOU *ALL* LOOK...WEAKER. AS IF OUR *STRENGTH*-- OUR *LIFE FORCES* WERE SOMEHOW BEING *LEECHED AWAY* FROM US...

HE'S THE KEY TO THIS BATTLE AND POSSIBLY THE *KEY* TO OUR *SALVATION* AS WELL.

...BY *HIM!* *KIERROK!*

I MUST TRY A *MINDPROBE* BEFORE HE'S FULLY *RECOVERED.*

PROFESSOR, *NO!* IT'S TOO *DANGEROUS!!*

THE CRY COMES *TOO LATE*-- FOR ALREADY, CHARLES XAVIER'S PROBE IS DEEP INSIDE THE MIND OF KIERROK, THE *SHATTERER OF SOULS...*

...DEEP INSIDE... HELL.

HE IS *SWEPT* ALONG LIKE A WOOD CHIP IN A *FLOOD* OF ALIEN IMAGES ...UNTIL, FOR THE *BRIEFEST* OF MOMENTS, HE ACTUALLY *BECOMES* KIERROK

AND IN THAT MOMENT, CHARLES XAVIER... SCREAMS!

LOOK OUT, ALL O' YE'S-- THE BEASTIE'S LOOSE AGAIN--!

GET THE PROFESSOR T'SAFETY-- MY SONIC BLASTS AREN'T GONNA HOLD THE DEMON LONG!

LORD IN HEAVEN, MY MIND... MY MIND...

WELL, IF SONIC BLASTS'LL DO NAE GUID, LET'S SEE HOW YON KELPIE FARES--

ARMORY

BRRRRRP

--AGAINST CLOSE-RANGE MACHINE-GUN FIRE!

MOIRA, ME DARLIN'--YE'RE A FOINE FIGURE OF A WOMAN--AN' A BRAVE ONE T' BOOT--AN' I'M THINKIN' I LIKE YE A LOT--

--BUT HERE AN' NOW, LASSIE--YE'RE PLAYIN' WAY OUTA YER LEAGUE.

SO STAY UNDER COVER, STAY OUTA TROUBLE--

--AN' STAY ALIVE!

CYCLOPS, THE PROFESSOR'S COMING AROUND.

LORD... WHAT I SAW ...WHAT I SAW... NO MAN SHOULD SEE...

SCOTT? HOW ARE WE... DOING...

NOT WELL, SIR. HOLDING OUR OWN...

WE... CANNOT DEFEAT KIERROK FIGHTING HAND-TO-HAND... MUST DESTROY HIM AT... SOURCE.

THE CAIRN, STORM... YOU MUST... SEAL THE CAIRN...

GO, CHILD... I WILL... DIRECT YOU...

BUT HURRY, STORM... HURRY! OR WE ARE ALL... DOOMED...

THE NIGHTWIND IS A WELCOME CARESS ON HER BARE SKIN AS SHE SOARS HIGH AND AWAY INTO THE MIDNIGHT SKY...

...SHE IS FREE NOW-- OF HOUSES, WALLS, PEOPLE --OF THE CAGES MANKIND BUILDS TO LOCK HIMSELF INTO ...FREE AND HAPPY AND ALIVE...

...FOR THE MOMENT.

THERE IS THE CAIRN THE PROFESSOR SPOKE OF--AND HE WAS RIGHT. THERE IS EVIL HERE...ANCIENT, MONSTROUS EVIL...

...AN EVIL THAT HUNGERS FOR PREY.

IT WILL BE A PLEASURE TO DESTROY IT--

AAARRRGH!

THERE IS NO WARNING--ONLY A LASH OF BLINDING AGONY DOWN STORM'S BACK AS THE PHANTOM SPEAR STRIKES HOME...

GODS--THE COLD --THE COLD!

CAN'T LET THEM HIT ME AGAIN--IF THEY DO, I'M DEAD--!

BUT WHAT ARE THEY--? THEY'RE NOT REAL--THEY'RE JUST THINGS OF SMOKE AND LIGHT--

--THINGS CREATED BY THE CAIRN!

DEMONSPAWN, THEN--CREATIONS OF THE N'GARAI!

WELL-- WHATEVER THEY ARE, FROM WHATEVER HELL THAT SPAWNED THEM--THEY'LL FIND STORM NO EASY PREY!

PERHAPS NOT, BUT THE N'GARAI--EVEN MINOR DEMONS--ARE NO MEAN FOES EITHER.

THAT BOLT OF ENERGY FROM THE CAIRN--THERE'S NO TIME TO AVOID IT--

ZZRAM!

MY MIND... *FUZZY*... NOTHING FITS TOGETHER ...I CAN'T *CONCENTRATE* ...I...

OH NO. OH DEAR GOD, *NO*-- THE *CAIRN*! I'M BEING PULLED INTO THE CAIRN-- INTO THE *DARK*--!

I'M BEING *PULLED IN* AND NO MATTER HOW HARD I *TRY*, I CAN'T *BREAK FREE*--

--BUT I *MUST*!

I MUST BE FREE--

--AND I SHALL BE FREE!!

BRRRRBBMMM!!

SIMULTANEITY: IN ONE INSTANT A CAIRN IS RIVEN WITH FIRE AND SACRED WORDS REFORMED--A CAGE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT FOREVER...

...AND IN THAT SAME INSTANT, THIRTY MILES AWAY, A DEMON SIMPLY...

AIIAAAAAAAA

...CEASES TO EXIST.

KIERROK --HE'S...GONE.

YES, SCOTT. I THINK THAT STORM HAS DONE HER WORK WELL THIS NIGHT.

BUT WHAT WAS HE, PROFESSOR? WHERE DID HE COME FROM? WHY'D HE ATTACK US?

I DON'T KNOW, SCOTT --I DON'T THINK WE'LL EVER KNOW FOR SURE.

BUT WHATEVER KIERROK AND HIS KIND WERE--THEY ONCE RULED MANKIND. AND THEY WANT VERY MUCH TO RULE MANKIND AGAIN.

EPILOGUE: A MINOR THREAD, REALLY --COME TO REST IN AN APPLE ORCHARD OUTSIDE RED HOOK, NEW YORK.

COLONEL ROSSI! MICKEY! MICKEY!!

IT'S NO USE, SIR --THEY'RE ALL DEAD --EVERY MAN ABOARD, INCLUDING THE COLONEL!

FOR PITY'S SAKE, MAJOR--THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO!

WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE LAST OF KIERROK, SCOTT--OR OF HIS N'GARAI KIND.

GOD HELP US ALL.

AND MILES AWAY, A MAN WHO HAS DONE ENOUGH THIS NIGHT, WATCHES THIS SCENE ON HIS COMMAND CONSOLE... AND LAUGHS!

NEXT ISSUE:

SOME OLD FRIENDS RETURN AND THE X-MEN SUDDENLY FIND THEMSELVES LOCKED IN A BATTLE TO THE DEATH IN THE SHOCKER WE CALL--

MY BROTHER, MY ENEMY!